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If Jane and Mark and Katharine and Martha had stopped to think, they might have ordered magic by the pound, or by the day, but a lakeful of magic causes extraordinary and unexpected events. By the end of vacation, with an unwilling sly old turtle, and Ali Baba's forty thieves, they help stepfather Mr. Smith save his failing bookstore in a most surprising way.

Magic by the Lake Details

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Author : Edward Eager , N.M. Bodecker (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review Magic by the Lake for online ebook

Maximilian Lee says

I actually would rate this book 2.5 stars. I think the story was very good, but I think the writing style is too old-timey.

Elizabeth says

The sequel to Half Magic just doesn't have the same kind of whimsical magic. Adriana and I devoured Half Magic, which I loved as a kid, but this one we kept putting down. Adriana loves to read series (Oz, Little House, Ramona), but this one was better off as a single book. I do like the references to other stories in it, which give me ideas about other things it might be fun to read with her, and I'm looking forward to reading other Edward Eager books with her.

Sarah says

This sequel to Half Magic is something I read out loud to my children. But it's instructive from a plot perspective. Half Magic introduced a brilliantly simple magical device, and much of the humor and plot spun from its tidy rules. (The gorgeously witty omniscient narration didn't hurt either.)

Fantasy writers take note--without the inspired "rule" which governs Half Magic, the sequel fails. The magic of this second book is scattershot, and the logic crumbles quickly. Of course I finished reading it aloud to the kids, but I couldn't wait until it ended.

Roy says

After reading Half Magic I was delighted to learn, as was my daughter, that Edward Eager wrote a sequel to it. Unfortunately it was considerably less charming than the original. I got the feeling that Eager felt pressured (maybe by his publisher, maybe by himself) into writing this book to capitalize on the success of the first one. But he'd already accomplished what he set out to do in Half Magic, so Magic by the Lake feels forced. In the first story the children do not realize initially that they have obtained a magical coin that can make their wishes come true. Therefore the first few wishes are made accidentally. Then there's the fact that the magic is only potent enough to make a wish come half true, causing all manner of trouble until they figure out how best to utilize it. In the sequel it's an entire lake that is magical, with a talking turtle as its representative. The magic is no longer halved. Instead, what the kids wish for needs to be water based. There's a bunch of negotiating with the turtle to establish and re-establish rules for the magic that I found to be needlessly convoluted. In books as in life, magic is difficult to recapture. Once is enough when done right and Half Magic was done just about perfectly. Transporting the magic to a lake was an unnecessary trip. By the end of the story the kids feel they are done with it. I don't blame them. Too much of a good thing can transform it from wondrous to tedious, from exhilarating to a major hassle. This is the message I got from Magic by the Lake, though I'm not sure if Eager intended to make this point by boring his previously

captivated audience.

Andrew Blok says

I certainly would have enjoyed this book more if I had read the previous books in the series. It's more of a collection of short stories about children who continue to bump into magic. After they bump into said magic, they have pretty much complete control over it. (Like the genie in Aladdin.) For this reason, the book is enjoyable, but not likely to remain one of my favorites. Each chapter is another fun adventure, but the stakes don't seem particularly high. I guess that's the charm of the book. It's a lot like a long vacation to a lake: a series of enjoyable, low stakes adventures. There is more excitement than just that, but it probably won't get your heart racing.

(It might be a nice book to read chapter by chapter aloud, actually. Especially if your audience is younger.)

Steven Bell says

Not as strong a story nor as interesting a central concept as *Half Magic* was but still an enjoyable read. There was a bit more racism in this book compared with *Half Magic* as well (including part where I chose to just imagine Ewoks instead.)

I am certainly curious about the remaining books and what other sort of central magical ideas they might hold.

An Odd1 says

Exciting "gave chase" p 63. More silly than scary. Not too many old sayings. Just enough flapper era for fun.

Magic has rules, limits, misunderstandings. Not quite literal like *Amelia Bedelia*
<https://www.goodreads.com/review/show....> But same, improved by illustrations. I could wish for color, but not too much in text to go by. Imitating mermaid (hands crossed demurely over front p 15), Jane was "combing her longish ungolden hair" p 30 is dark at 16. Not syrupy sweet, tempers do flare, accidents happen.

Drawings spike curiosity. Title page has spectacled bearded explorer in Inuit furs, petting cat in basket, and looking sideways at similar plump bearded pirate holding telescope and sword. Are those cannon balls behind him? Second title page has mermaids holding turtle legs between them and banner "Oh Turtle". On p1, Katharine ("nine" p 68) stands up (before seat belts) beside Mark and Jane (12 going into "seventh grade" p 13 "twelve" p 67), had to search for tiny Martha ("seven" p 133) between parents, Smiths, in front. Is cat Carrie hiding under car blanket? already leaped out?

In "middle of July" p 13, on their first country vacation, cottage is (called "Magic by the Lake" p 7. In the rowboat, girls and boy have same one-piece (black?) U-neck, no-sleeve p 12, boy-cut bottoms that bell out under water p 14 swimsuits. Some three hours from home in a Model-T (1908-1927), Mark catches a big turtle, who talks. By wishes, the whole lake is filled with magic beings "fairies .. Davy Jones .. Neptune" and

more p 18.

What happened to other boats and people? Did they see magic? Being sunset and dinnertime, maybe not.

Mark grabs the tortoise's head, so he agrees to three more wishes. Learning from the book before, they ask for one magic adventure per day. "No grown-ups noticing" .. nothing scary" p 21. Except "nothing *does*" p 21 scare Turtle.

A mermaid tows them underwa

ter to a tropical isle, where they invisibly - pirates are "grown-ups" - watch pirate captain bury treasure.

Hearing the children whisper, Captain Chauncey Cutlass threatens to shoot crew, but doesn't, unlike Robert Stevenson's "Treasure Island" <https://www.goodreads.com/review/show...>

Aboard ship, "small, fat" p 43 Martha's p 40 "Pinch them, fairies, black and blue" p 38 to provoke mutiny goes too far, and "spirits" p 39 splash overboard. (view spoiler)

Identical flappers in dark bobs p 42 could give a clue, but I forgot how young 1920s teens married. Older two girls dip toes in water, wish to join romantic dance, age 16. In those days "dark" meant opposite of "blonde". Topsfield "dark" and Wigglesworth "blonde", both 16 at "Princeton Prep" p 71, disbelieve "grubby" p 63 "tag-alongs" p 66, escort beauties p 62 on canoe ride.

Turtle warns a "dry-land wish takes a lot out of a lake" p 76. Mark threatens to paint him "white .. with pink rosebuds" p 78, to get wishes every third day. On that stormy, leaky roof day, wishes seem far till Jane realizes "lake water .. in pan". Who knew school science cycle of evaporation and condensation could be magic? They take cups full of hot cocoa on purpose, and Carrie by accident, to the South Pole, but Mark finally remembers "midnight sun" p 95 stays up all night there. (view spoiler)

Mark overhears parents "His Business is Suffering" p 105. Holding lake water in emptied perfume bottle, "Martha in a rage" storms "all the rules were broken and .. with the pirate's treasure" p 115. Silly Mark just wishes they follow. Cannibals tie them up and start boiling big pots of water. Going back fails again. Magic seems all used up from careless wishes. (view spoiler)

Turtle hints "Time will tell" p 189 when Martha asks about meeting Roger and Ann again.

Hope says

If you are a fan of fine children's literature, Edward Eager is an author you should add to your list. Eager was a British playwright who began to write his own children's stories when he couldn't find anything suitable to

read to his son. Just as author C. S. Lewis credits George McDonald for influencing every one of his stories, Eager gives author Edith Nesbit the credit for igniting his own story-telling imagination. His books are a lovely combination of realistic children and magical adventures.

I enjoyed reading Half Magic a few years ago, but its sequel, Magic by the Lake, is easily twice as funny. Jane, Mark, Katherine and Martha are siblings who are staying in a lakeside cottage for the summer. They meet a magic turtle, discover that the lake is enchanted, and have a wonderful summer of adventures.

The excellent writing, wry humor and constant nod to other children's books make this story a booklover's delight.

mark monday says

oh, Edward Eager, you really seem like a swell guy. a family man but not one of those mawkish mewling types who always seem to be about to burst into tears when they talk about their fam. you *get* kids and you don't bring a lot of sentimentality to the table either; you capture the cheerfulness & the mood swings & the sweetness & a little bit of the sour as well. you root your adventures in prosaic reality but you manage to make prosaic reality not bad, not bad at all, its own sort of adventure.

written in 1957 but set several decades earlier, this fun little trifle is Eager all over. 4 siblings spend a summer at a lake, A MAGIC LAKE, the magic courtesy of a grouchy magic turtle. they get various wishes and go on various adventures including seeing pirates, cannibals, Antarctica, and what it's like to be a few years older and going on a date with a couple pretentious twits. the bloodthirsty youngest girl was my predictable favorite of the four, but I also wouldn't mind having fearless and slightly condescending oldest-sister Jane as a child either. well, all four of them are actually pretty peachy. they spend the last adventure trying to figure out how to help their stepdad's ailing business, and that's just adorable.

favorite part was when they stumble across another group of kids on their own magical adventure with their own magical rules that must be followed. surreal and surprising and kinda awesome.

loved one of the last lines, it really spoke to me:

"You mean it's really over?" said Katherine. "I don't believe it. It wouldn't all end like this. What would be the point? Why, we didn't learn a moral lesson, or anything!"

well isn't that just the truth, kids. welcome to the world!

Courtney says

At some point you'd think that these books were get repetitive, or wear thin, or get boring, they don't! They just stay happily adorable.

Greg Santana says

Short and sweet.

Four children: Three girls and one boy.

You have children being rash and reflexive plus the ability of magic.

They get into trouble after attaining their wish, and being unable to return. Goes with the theme of rash decision making.

There's some silly transformations, teleportation, some tribal cannibalism (ugh. 1957).

In this book, the children became a little more altruistic in their wishes, so that was nice.

A little too many *deu ex machinas*.

Some nice puns and clever writing too.

Not sure there was any character arc. They all seem the same by the end.

Lisa Wolf says

I read *Magic by the Lake* with my 10-year-old, and unfortunately, we were both disappointed. After reading - and loving -- *Half Magic*, we expected great things from this sequel. Sadly, *Magic by the Lake* just doesn't hold up in comparison to *Half Magic*. The magic in the story is rather amorphous, with weird rules that shift and make little sense, and the entire plot feels a bit haphazard. I've loved a few of Edward Eager's magical books, but *Magic by the Lake* is not one of the best.

Kailey (BooksforMKs) says

Jane, Mark, Katherine, and Martha are back in another magical adventure, this time on vacation by the lake. A talking turtle guides them through the difficulties of wishing with "wet magic" from the lake, and they encounter mermaids, pirates, buried treasure, and take a trek to the South Pole. But their selfish wishes get them into trouble, and it's only when they learn to use their wishes for the good of others that the magic truly begins.

One of the best things about Edward Eager's stories is that the children are doing ordinary things in between their magical adventures, and their everyday doings are interrupted by the extraordinary. Magic is around every corner, and it is the children's own willingness to believe and accept the magic that invites us into the story too.

I am so delighted with these books! I read this one because I had a migraine, and it helped me to feel better, took my mind off the pain, and I read it all in one sitting.

Kate says

Edward Eager's books were stories I loved as a child and having re-read them as an adult I still quite enjoy them. The stories and characters hold up to the test of time. These books are clever and intriguing and the characters are very endearing.

Helena Sorensen says

We love Edward Eager!

Grace says

I'm... not sure what I expected when I picked up this book. Out of order, mind you, because my friend recommended it and said I could read it out of order. I wasn't expecting to be so—intrigued, I guess? This reminds me of a children's version of Dean's *The Secret Country* trilogy for some reason.

I'm tempted to skip to the last one of this series just to see what happens. Why? Because even if this is a children's book, it has some very curious and interesting potential storylines and rules hinted at. About magic and future plots, you know? There are rules and then there are Rules. And they talk about magic like it's an entity, which may have been explained more in previous books but not this one. Also, there's such a thing as a SAS, which is not to be confused with SOS. It's pretty cool. The children all have solid personalities and are each their own character, too.

So, cute story! May actually check out the next book or so!

What some people might be uncomfortable reading about in this book because of personal opinion or belief: I mean, it's a children's book so there really isn't anything that's a big problem...?

Marilyn Shea says

It was such a pleasure to read this favorite from my childhood again. I have a first edition 1961 copy of it, so it looked and smelled and felt like it did when I first read it as a little girl. The N. M. Bodecker illustrations are so excellent and the pace and the language are so funny and witty. I was struck, this time, by the pirate treasure chapter in which people with dark skin are described as cannibals, waving spears and saying things like "ooga booga" in a way that used to be considered humorous but is really just racist. The section on the thieves from Ali Baba mentioned in an action scene that people were falling on their faces without regard for the direction of Mecca, a joke made about the Islamic tradition. I never noticed how inappropriate this kind of humor was when I was a child. It was very commonplace and unremarkable at the time. So much has changed for the better since then in our knowledge and acceptance of other cultures. This story takes place in the 1920s, an era when my parents were children, and the simple flow of daily events seems so comforting. Children amused themselves then with real experiences and books, of course. Eager's writing always makes many literary references that kids today may not be able to understand, but I was a bookish child and felt a little smugly superior when I caught one of them.

Johnny Bennett says

Magic by the Lake continues the Edward Eager tradition of using word play to make magic go astray. The story is cute and moves right along. It seems appropriate for all audiences.

Karen says

Oh, they don't make many children's books like this anymore. This book was positively enchanting. It was reasonable without being mundane (ex: "the four children, while bright and often agreeable, were not saints"), thrilling without actually being frightening (there's always a *deus ex machina* to get them out of trouble), and picturesquely quaint (who doesn't want to read a book about lakeside magical summer adventures?). The vocabulary level is also a lot higher than books children often get today. I noticed: veto, prostrate, protrude, venturesome, smote, wan, excursion, just to mention a few. I saw many words that I've been using as word-of-the-day words in my class, so that strengthened my feeling that I'm choosing the right words. And all in all, this book just had that delicious feel of an old-fashioned adventure, free of care and concern.

I will say that there are some dated elements that bear discussing with whoever reads this. There's a lot of reference to frocks and excursion launches and motoring and other things from a by-gone era that would need a bit of explaining. The thing that I found really interesting though was Eager's mention of stereotypical characters. There were two in particular I wanted to point out. The first was cannibalistic natives and the second was the forty thieves from the *1001 Arabian Nights*. In each case, the portrayal was not exactly how we would probably choose to portray them today (they were cannibalistic natives, after all). But there was enough humor in them, I think, to make them less of a stereotype. For example, the natives spoke in that antiquated "white-person-imitating-native-speak-Peter-Pan" nonsense. You know: "Who speakum to usum likum to gettum killedum" stuff reminiscent of the 1950s and 1960s. But on the other hand, all the children try to pretend they are gods because that's what worked for the conquistadors, but it doesn't work on these folk. Mark tries to prove it by digging out a match and lighting it, but the chief scoffs and informs him they know all about safety matches. So it's a mixed bag. Likewise, with the forty thieves, there's a lot of "Allah" mentioning and mentioning Mecca and stuff like that, but when a thief has to climb in the oil jar to surprise Ali Baba, he says, "Oh dear, I always get so nervous in an enclosed space. I don't think I can go through with it, I really don't!" As British as any British chap that ever Britished Britishly. So while there are some cultural stereotypes, they all seem to be offset by adding in something distinctly culturally white. I don't want to use the term "normal" because it's not that white should be normal, but it is true that white culture was the majority cultural trend in those days in America and Britain. I think he was trying to being a smack of the familiar and therefore it offsets a too intense cultural stereotyping. But it still should be discussed with the readers. I have many complicated feelings about this that don't come off well in writing, too, so please, keep in mind I'm a bit of a poor excuse for a communicator.

What I hate is people rejecting books completely because of outdated stuff like that. This book has many, many merits. It shouldn't be completely discarded because of some outdated elements. Should those outdated elements be discussed and pointed out why they are dated and what a much better modern approach should be? Absolutely. That would require some level of parenting skill, however, so my final recommendation is: this book should be read by children whose parents are willing to talk to their children and have real

discussions with them about representation and how that matters in the real world. Children of parents who don't parent, you're on your own and I hope you come to some good conclusions on your own.

Rick Stuckwisch says

Classic children's fantasy fiction. Just excellent. Such a nostalgic treat to revisit these great stories again with my own children now, after all these years. Lovin' every minute of it.
